

## Introduction

South Dakota will celebrate its statehood centennial in 1989, and South Dakotans everywhere will spend the year remembering their heritage. In preparation for that event, this double issue presents essays on two enduring aspects of the South Dakota experience—land and weather. It was the promise of free land that drew large numbers of settlers to Dakota Territory in the 1870s and 1880s, but the region's harsh climate often thwarted the settlers' efforts at making a living from the soil. In his article, Gilbert C. Fite considers the many values associated with landownership and the various uses of land, while Richard Maxwell Brown suggests that adverse weather is the abiding image of Dakota's frontier heritage. Also in this issue, Gerald F. De Jong outlines a method for studying the homesteaders themselves. He provides a comprehensive review of the sources available for the researching of European ethnic groups in South Dakota.

The South Dakota Committee on the Humanities supported the research that made the articles in this pre-centennial issue possible. Each year, the Committee on the Humanities sponsors the Seminar for Humanities Scholars in order to provide South Dakota scholars with a broader perspective on the humanities, and on the linkage between humanities disciplines, through exposure to nationally and internationally acclaimed scholars. Information derived from the seminars is intended to enhance classroom teaching and to assist scholars in their public programming efforts in South Dakota. Gilbert C. Fite and Richard Maxwell Brown presented slightly different versions of their articles at the 1984 Seminar for Humanities Scholars on 15 September in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Gerald F. De Jong's research was also funded by a grant from the South Dakota Committee on the Humanities, which is an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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